

Stars shine at talent night

Love for Mount Doug draws idols David Foster and Nelly Furtado to school's 80th anniversary party

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The University of Victoria was host to a unique musical event on Saturday night, one which feted Mount Doug high school with an inspired night of music featuring contributions from two of its most famous alumni.

Music producer David Foster and pop star Nelly Furtado were on hand for the concert and talent showcase held at the University Centre's Farquhar Auditorium, the finale of a sprawling 10-day celebration honouring the Gordon Head high school's 80th anniversary.

Needless to say, it was a musical event befitting of such a starry cast.

The lead-up to the Mount Doug Idol talent competition, which Foster judged later in the evening alongside Furtado and his daughter, Amy, began with an all-star band playing some of Foster's biggest hits.

The group — keyboardist Morry Stearns, bassist Dennis Ferbey, drummer Brad Clark, singer-keyboardist Duncan Meiklejohn, singers April Gislason and Diane Pancel, keyboardist Thomas Kinzel, saxophonist Chris Millington, and guitarists Norm McPherson and Steve McDonald — kicked their 40-minute set off with *Wildflower*, Foster's first official hit with the group Skylark.

The staples that followed — *I Have Nothing*, a song Foster co-wrote for *The Bodyguard*; Foster's No. 1 smash, *St. Elmo's Fire (Man in Motion)*; and *Unforgettable*, a Natalie Cole/Nat King Cole duet tackled on this night by Meiklejohn and Pancel — all demonstrated Foster's

ability at both writing and arranging.

But when the man himself, who attended Mount Doug in 1966 (he left following his Grade 11 year to pursue a career in music), stepped to the stage and took a seat behind his piano, it showed his true strength: performing.

A snappily dressed Foster was all smiles as he sat behind the piano for *Love Theme From St. Elmo's Fire*, beaming even as he paused to take a cellphone picture mid-song.

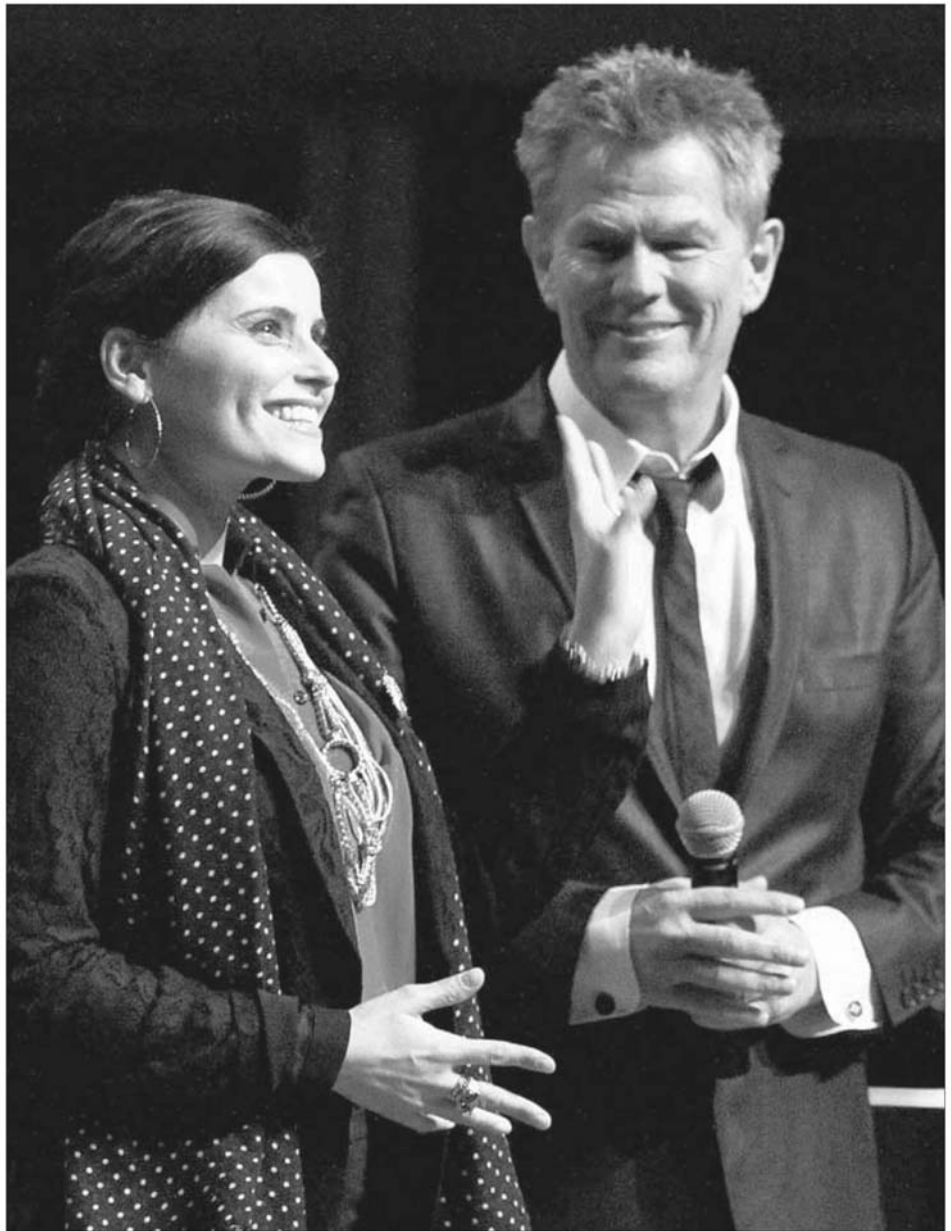
"I love Mount Doug!" the recently-married Foster bellowed at the song's conclusion. "That's why I'm not on my honeymoon, I'm here in Victoria."

Foster chatted with MC Terry David Mulligan briefly, revealing that he is about to get a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and imparting to the hushed crowd an emotional story about being bullied as a teen.

After introducing his fellow jurors to the stage, Foster was interrupted by a comedic video tribute from two former Mount Doug students, NBA star Steve Nash and former Yahoo president Jeff Mallett, who made a last-minute bid for Idol inclusion.

The contestants, all Mount Doug alumni or relatives of alumni, included Vancouver performers Amanda Wood and Joni Anderson, California-based Cristine Seiber, and Victoria residents Justin Hewitt and Kale Penny. The winners weren't available at press time.

For the Mount Doug Idol winners, visit timescolonist.com/arts.mdevlin@timescolonist.com



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David Foster and Nelly Furtado interact with the audience at the Farquhar Auditorium during Mount Doug Idol Saturday night. The talent competition was part of the school's 80th anniversary celebrations.